IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JUNE 6, 1838.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. LINN submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany Senate Bill No. 206.]

The Select Committee, to which was referred a bill to authorize the President of the United States to occupy the Oregon Territory, submit to the consideration of the Senate the following report:

The attention of the Government has been, on several occasions, called to this important subject by bills and resolutions, through able and elaborate reports from committees of Congress, and in various Executive communications. We will not ascend higher in the Legislative history of this Territory than the last annual message of President Monroe, in which he says: "In looking to the interests which the United States have on the Pacific ocean, and on the western coast of this continent, the propriety of establishing a military post at the mouth of the Columbia river, or at some other point in that quarter, within our acknowledged limits, is submitted to the consideration of Congress. Our commerce and fisheries on that sea and along that coast have much increased, and are increasing. It is thought that a military post, to which our ships of war might resort, would afford protection to every interest, and have a tendency to conciliate the tribes of the northwest, with whom our trade is extensive. It is thought, also, that, by the establishment of such a post, the intercourse between our western States and Territories and the Pacific, and our trade with the tribes residing in the interior, on each side of the Rocky mountains, would be essentially promoted. To carry this object into effect, the appropriation of an adequate sum to authorize the employment of a frigate, with an officer of the corps of engineers, to explore the mouth of the Columbia river, and the coast contiguous thereto, to enable the Executive to make such establishment, at the most suitable point, is recommended to Congress."

Such were the views of an enlightened statesman and patriot. The administration which succeeded took up this matter, and it became the subject of a negotiation between the Government of Great Britain and the United States, in which nothing was done definitively to settle the claims of the parties. This correspondence was marked by great ability.

The lapse of time, and the progress of events in that quarter of the continent which are unfriendly to the interests of the United States, require, in

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the opinion of your committee, action on the part of this Government, as prompt and decided as may be consistent with the peace and good understanding which now exists, and we sincerely hope will ever continue to exist, between England and the United States, who have so many reasons to wish its continuance.

President Jackson, aware of the importance of this country to our best interests, employed a special agent to proceed to the territory in question, who was charged with the duty of examining into its political, physical, and geographical condition. But the committee will quote the words of the instructions. The Secretary of State writes to Mr. Slacum as follows, in his note of November 11, 1835:

"SIR: Having understood that you are about to visit the Pacific ocean, the President has determined to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded to obtain some specific and authentic information in regard to the inhabitants of the country in the neighborhood of the Oregon or Columbia river. In the belief that you will willingly lend your services in the prosecution of this object, I now give you, by the President's direction, such general instructions as may be necessary for your guidance in the execution of the proposed commission.

"Upon your arrival at the northwest coast of America, you will embrace the earliest opportunity to proceed to and up the river Oregon, by such conveyances as may be thought to offer the greatest facilities for attaining the ends in view. You will, from time to time, as they occur in your progress, stop at the different settlements of whites on the coast of the United States, and on the banks of the river, and also at the various Indian villages on the banks, or in the immediate neighborhood of that river; ascertain, as nearly as possible, the population of each; the relative number of whites (distinguishing the nation to which they belong) and aborigines; the jurisdiction the whites acknowledge; the sentiments entertained by all in respect to the United States, and to the two European powers having possessions in that region; and, generally, endeavor to obtain all such information, political, physical, statistical, and geographical, as may prove useful or interesting to this Government. For this purpose, it is recommended that you should, whilst employed on this service, keep a journal, in which to note down whatever may strike you as worthy of observation, and by the aid of which you will be enabled, when the journey is completed, to make a full and accurate report to this department of all the information you may have collected in regard to the country and its inhabitants.

"Your necessary and reasonable travelling expenses will be paid, from the beginning of your journey from the coast of the Pacific to the Columbia river, and till your return to this city. Vouchers, in all cases where it may be practicable to get them, will be required in the settlement of your account at the Treasury Department.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"JOHN FORSYTH."

On the 1st of June, 1836, Mr. Slacum proceeded to comply with these instructions; and the results of his examinations are mostly contained in a memorial addressed to Congress on the 18th of December last. From this memorial we will make copious extracts, it being replete with recent and authentic information.

Before proceeding further, the committee will devote a few moments to the question of right to the Oregon Territory.

This question has been so ably argued by the late Governor Floyd, who was the first to urge on Congress the use and occupation of the Oregon Territory, by Mr. F. Bayliess, in two reports to the House of Representatives, and in the diplomatic correspondence of our Government with Great Britain, and in various other public documents, as to make it unnecessary for us to go at large into this subject.

The validity of the title of the United States to the territory on the northwest coast, between the latitude of 42° to 49°, is not questioned by any power except Great Britain. The 3d article of the treaty of Washington, of 22d of February, 1819, between the United States and Spain, established their mutual boundary line on the parallel of 42°; and, from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific ocean, Spain made a formal and full relinquishment of all claim north of that line. The southernmost point to which Russia claims on that coast was fixed by her treaty with Great Britain of February, 1825, at 54° 40'. By the provisions of these two treaties the space between the Spanish boundary north, at 42°, and the Russian boundary south, at 54° 40', is *entirely* unclaimed, except by the United States and Great Britain. The respective claims of these two powers have been, from time to time, the subject of negotiation and provisional arrangement by treaty; having in view the *temporary* protection of the interests of the parties, while the final adjustment of their rights is left open to future arrangements. These temporary arrangements, by the convention of 1825, are *mutually* obligatory, until either of the parties who may desire a change shall have given to the other one year's notice.

The treaty of Ghent contains no *specific* allusion to the possessions of the United States on the northwest coast; but under the claim of the treaty, article 1st, which provides that all territory, places, and possessions, *whatever*, taken by either party from the other during the war, &c., shall be restored without delay, the United States' settlement at the mouth of the Columbia river, called Astoria, was included, and subsequently formally restored to an authorized agent of the United States; by which act the Oregon Territory for the first time became the subject of negotiation between the two Governments.

By the convention with Great Britain of 1818, it was stipulated that, east of the Stony mountains and west of the lakes, the northern boundary of the United States and the southern boundary of Great Britain should be the 49th parallel of latitude; but in regard to the territory west of the Stony mountains, and on the northwest coast, it was stipulated that any country which may be claimed by either party shall, with its harbors, bays, rivers, &c., be *free and open for the term of ten years* to the vessels, citizens, &c., of the two powers; it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country, the only object being to prevent disputes and differences arising among themselves.

When, in 1823, negotiations were opened for the continuance of the temporary convention of 1818, the question in regard to the title and boundaries of the mouth of the Columbia began to be considered of much importance in our relations with Great Britain. Although, previous to this time, there had been some diplomatic conversation on the subject, there had been no formal written negotiation until 1823, when Mr. Adams, as Secre-

tary of State, gave instructions to Mr. Rush, the United States Minister in England, to urge the settlement of our territorial limits west of the Stony mountains. Mr. Rush was instructed to suggest the parallel of 51° as the southern boundary of Great Britain. But if the line already settled at 49° latitude to the Stony mountains should be earnestly insisted on by Great Britain, "we will consent to carry it in continuance on the same parallel west to the Pacific ocean." To the propositions of Mr. Rush, made in pursuance of these instructions, the British commissioners answered by controverting all the facts and principles on which the United States rested, and they declared that Great Britain considered the whole of the unoccupied parts of America as open to her future settlement, in like manner as heretofore, and they included in this description the unoccupied territory between the forty-second and fifty-first degrees of north latitude. Great Britain would not relinquish the principle of colonization on that coast. She insisted on the principles established against Spain in the Nootka Sound controversy; besides, the commissioners contended that Great Britain had a paramount title by discovery and occupancy. The negotiations terminated in the convention of 1827, by which that of 1818 was indefinitely extended, with permission to either party to abrogate it upon twelve months' notice. This convention fixes the actual existing relations between Great Britain and the United States on the subject of the northwest territory.

What little consequence Great Britain attached to her claim of a right to colonize, and how little she relied on it for any permanent purpose, is shown by the fact that, during the progress of the negotiation, she proposed, in a formal *projet* submitted by her commissioners, to fix the dividing line definitively on the 49° parallel of north latitude, until that parallel strikes the northwesternmost branch of the Columbia river; thence down the middle of that river to the Pacific ocean. And at the moment that this pretension of a right of colonization was urged upon our commissioners, it was *abandoned* by the British Ambassador at St. Petersburgh, who, in February, 1825, concluded a treaty, relinquishing to Russia all claim, of whatever nature, north of 54° 40'. Indeed, it was obvious that whether the results of the Nootka Sound controversy in 1790 had been wrung by Great Britain from the weakness of Spain, or had been yielded by her justice, that neither Russia nor the United States could acquiesce in a principle which would leave their valuable possessions on the northwest coast perpetually open to the capricious inroads of other powers. The pretension of an unoccupied coast in 1825 was not less monstrous than that of Russia to a closed sea in that region, which disturbed the gravity of the diplomatic corps in 1820. The British negotiators at all times declined the responsibility of starting this pretension in writing, and having, since the negotiation, in which it was verbally urged against us, abandoned it in regard to Russia, and as, in its nature, its existence is terminated by the lapse of time and the progress of events, it may *now* be considered obsolete. Besides the right of colonization, Great Britain claimed by the right of discovery, and especially referred to the expedition of Sir F. Drake in 1578. This claim is entirely inconsistent with the right of colonization. If this coast was discovered two centuries and a half since, it can hardly be open to discovery and settlement now. But in regard to any claim of Great Britain having its origin anterior to 1763, it is entirely precluded by the treaty of Paris of that year, by which she renounces *all* claim to

any portion of North America west of the Mississippi. It may, however, be remarked, in regard to this expedition of Sir Francis Drake, that the narration of its incidents is not only incredible, but their existence impossible; and, therefore, no title to any particular part of the coast can be deduced from it. Putting this voyage out of the question, Great Britain does not set up any title which has the appearance of validity under the principles avowed by her own commissioners in 1823, when, in controverting the rights of Spain, they asserted that Great Britain would *never* admit that the mere fact of Spanish navigators having *first* seen the coast at particular points, without any *subsequent and efficient act of sovereignty or settlement* following, on the part of Spain, was sufficient to exclude other nations from that portion of the globe.

Certainly if mere discovery of the coast could give title, that of Spain would be entirely incontrovertible; and this Government having succeeded to her rights, the question would be at an end. Balboa discovered the western shore of America in September, 1513, and "advancing up to his middle in the waves, with his buckler and sword in hand, took possession of that ocean in the name of the King, his master, and vowed to defend it with his arms against all his enemies." Cortez discovered California, in 1526, up to about parallel 30°. In 1543 Cubrillo explored the coast from that point up to 42°. In the year 1592 John de Fuca discovered the strait which bears his name, in latitude 48°. But the principle implied in the declaration of the British commissioners is unquestionably correct, viz: that discovery accompanied with subsequent and efficient acts of sovereignty or settlement are necessary to give title. Now there is no pretence that Great Britain has a title thus acquired; and all that is left to ascertain is whether the United States can establish such a one in herself.

And first, as to discovery. There is nothing on record of any actual *investigation* of the coast between 44° and 47°, previous to the year 1792, and it is certain that up to that period the existence of the Columbia river was unknown.

Not to dwell on the reported settlement by Hendricks, in 1785, in May, 1792, Captain Robert Gray, in the ship Columbia, from Boston, sailing under the flag of the United States, saw and entered into the land, which had a very good appearance of a harbor; and which was, in fact, the mouth of a very large river, then seen for the first time by a citizen of a civilized nation.

Captain Gray entered the river, named it Columbia, and named the capes on either side; continuing to explore it from the 7th to the 21st of May. Having fixed its latitude, and distinctly marked the topography of the neighborhood, and the bearings of the various headlands around the bay, he returned to the United States, and announced his important discovery. Thus was the Columbia discovered by the United States from the sea. In the year 1803, an exploring expedition was fitted out by this Government, to penetrate, over land, into the region west of the Rocky or Stony mountains, as far as the mouth of the Columbia river. Every body knows the signal success of this admirably conducted enterprise, which opened to the world the vast regions of the Upper Missouri and Rocky mountains, and added to geography the magnificent valley of the Columbia. Ten years before, Mackenzie had penetrated to the Western ocean, but his route did not touch any of the waters of this grand basin,

being several degrees north of it. And thus this great discovery, both from the interior and the coast, belongs to the United States. The exploring expedition of Lewis and Clarke following up the discovery of the Columbia river, by Captain Gray, is in itself an important circumstance in our title. It was notice to the world of claim, and that solemn act of possession was followed up by a settlement and occupation, made by that enterprising and intelligent merchant, John Jacob Astor, under the countenance and patronage of this Government. This settlement and occupation continued to the late war with Great Britain, and by the treaty of Ghent was restored to us formally, after its conquest from the United States during that war. Thus it will be seen that our title has the requisites prescribed by Great Britain herself. With this is combined the concurrent title of Spain, which was derived also from discovery, settlement, &c., and which, by the treaty of 1819, was transferred to the United States. The extent of the territory on the northwest coast, which is properly embraced within our limits, is to be ascertained by the application of the two recognised principles to the established facts of the case. 1st. That the discovery and occupation of the mouth of a river gives title to the region watered by it and its tributaries, as in the case of the Hudson, James, Mississippi rivers, &c. 2d. That the discovery and settlement of a new country by a civilized power, gives title half-way to the settlement of the nearest civilized power. The boundary between them is a medium line. Either of these principles will carry our line as far as 49°.

Its occupation by our Government would secure a vast Indian and fur trade; its forests of gigantic timber; extended plains; rich alluvions, where animals and vegetables assume their brightest forms; would open a direct trade with California, China, Japan, and the Sandwich and Oriental islands generally; it would secure its prodigious fisheries of sturgeon, anchovies, and salmon; for Lewis and Clarke say "that the multitudes of salmon in the Oregon are inconceivable, and they ascend to its very sources, to the very ridge of the dividing mountains; the water is so clear that they may be seen at the depths of fifteen or twenty feet; at certain seasons of the year they float in such quantities down the stream and are drifted ashore, that the Indians have only to collect, split them open, and dry them." It would doubtless secure, beyond the danger of interruption, constant intercourse and trade between the valley of the Mississippi and the Oregon.

But, to wave these advantages, the importance to the United States, in a commercial point of view, of possessing *some* harbor on the northwest coast of America will be seen at once, when it is recollected that upwards of $12,000,000 worth of property is afloat in the Pacific ocean, in the whale trade alone, and which gives employment to upwards of 8,000 seamen. These whalers must have some place or places at which to refit after their long voyages. These vessels *now* resort to the Sandwich islands; but it is to be remembered that colonial restrictions may be enforced in time of peace, and in time of war this valuable and important branch of trade might fall an easy prey to a foreign power, for want of a port to give it shelter. It is the duty of a wise Government to provide against such contingencies. The Bay of St. Francis, into which is discharged the fine river Sacrimento, is one of the noblest harbors on the continent, and capable of containing the whole mercantile navy of the world. But this magnificent harbor, unfortunately, is not within the jurisdiction of the United States, but belongs to our neighbors of Mexico.

Between this point and the mouth of the Columbia river, the coast presents an almost uniform straight line, in which few headlands or indentations appear. Mr. Slacum says: "From the map of the country, which I shall be able to prepare, you will discover thereon three or four rivers which fall into the Pacific Ocean between latitude 41° 33′ and the Columbia; three of them within Pelican bay, in latitude 42° 4′ north, are within the limits of the States, but are not laid down on any published chart of the day:

"Klamet river, 41° 33′ north latitude, 123° 54′ west longitude.

"West Rogues river, 42° 26′ north latitude, 124° 14′ west longitude.

"West Cowis river, 43° 31′ north latitude, 124° 4′ west longitude.

"West Umpqua, 43° 50′ north latitude, 123° 56′ west longitude.

"Last year the schooner Cadborough entered two of these with 8 feet of water. 'Pelican bay' is a good harbor. From the information of Mr. Young and other trappers, I am told that the Umpqua is nearly the same size as the Wilhamit. The lands are equally good and well timbered. The river called 'Rogues,' or, sometimes, Smith's river, abounds in the finest timber west of the Rocky mountains; and it may be fairly estimated that the valleys of these rivers, certainly within the jurisdiction of the United States, contain at least 14,000,000 acres of land, of first quality, equal to the best lands of Missouri and Illinois. In entering the Columbia river you find a bar extending across the channel (two miles in width) from the north to the south shoals. The shoalest water on the bar is $4\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms, but the prevailing winds in winter are from the westward, and the entrance lies exposed to the swell of the Pacific ocean. The bar breaks with a wind of any force, if from the west of north or south and west of east. At present, vessels are often kept several days waiting for clear weather to run in, having neither beacons, buoys, or lights to guide them when near the shoal. This delay would be obviated in a great measure if the coast was surveyed and properly lighted." Mr. Baylies, in his report, says: "It has been very justly said, 'that it is a question, at first somewhat difficult of solution, why Great Britain should have been so extremely anxious to wrest from the United States a territory comparatively of limited extent, and, considering the vast domains in Asia, Africa, Australia, and America, which she has yet to populate and reclaim, comparatively of little value;' yet a little reflection will suggest the answer.

"Great Britain adopts no plans of policy from caprice or vanity; her ambition is developed in a system of wise and sagacious projects, to check, to influence, and to control all nations by means of her navy and her commerce. In prosperity and in adversity, in peace and in war, she has pursued this grand design, with an energy and perseverance which does infinite credit to her political sagacity and foresight."

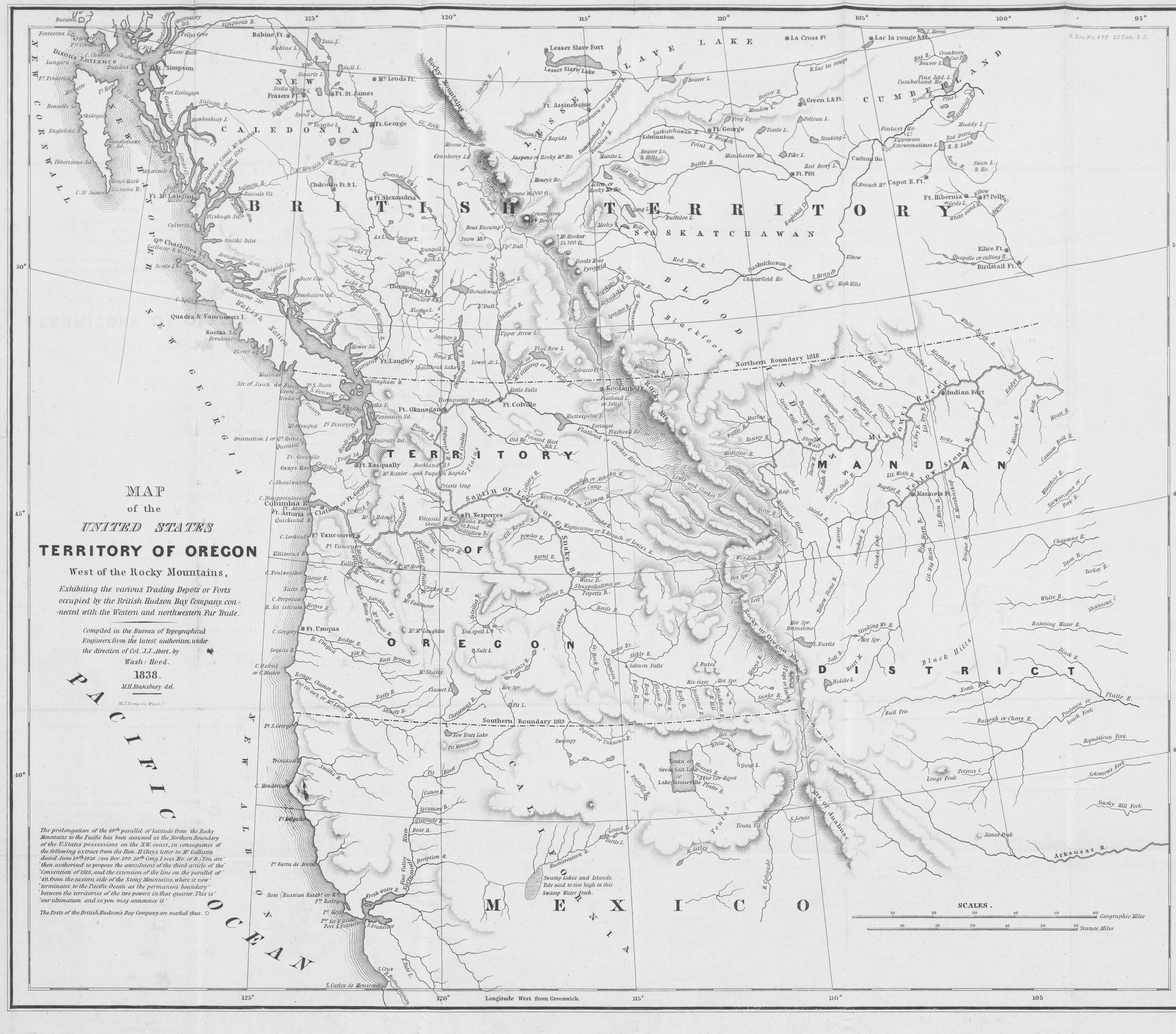
The day is not far distant when, by the opening of a direct communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans across the Isthmus of Darien, the whole trade of the eastern hemisphere will be changed. The policy of Great Britain is, therefore, to possess the strongest points of control on this grand thoroughfare of commerce, as well as over every other commercial thoroughfare of the world. One of these points she already possesses in Jamaica, and the Sandwich islands is to be, nay, is, the other point of her grasping ambition. These islands lie on that parallel of latitude which vessels seek in the passage to China, Manilla, and Batavia, from the west coast of America, in order to get the force of the trade-winds, which

are strongest between 18° and 24° of north latitude. They lie as directly in the route to China as the Cape of Good Hope for ships from the eastward. They would, therefore, become of immense value as a commercial depot, and in time of war they would, in a military point of view, be as important as the Mauritius in the Indian ocean. It may be assumed, then, that these islands will fall into the hands of the British Government; for when has she neglected her foreign policy? Look at her possessions in the East—Malta, Gibraltar, the key to the commerce of the Mediterranean, St. Helena, Ascension, Cape of Good Hope, the Mauritius, Singapore, (which effectually commands the straits of Malacca,) the Benin islands, lying off the coast of Japan; and she only lacks the Sandwich islands and the beautiful river Columbia, and the territory watered by its numerous tributaries, to command, by her mighty means, the commerce of the whole world.

Independent of the importance, in a commercial point of view, of this territory to the United States, it assumes vast importance when we come to consider the influence it is to have, in the hands of the British, over the fierce and warlike tribes of Indians on the north, and from our western frontier to the Pacific ocean. On this point, we hope to be pardoned for the long extract from Mr. Slacum's memoir. When speaking of the Hudson Bay Company—

"I shall endeavor," he says, "to point out the enterprise of this company, and the influence they exercise over the Indian tribes within our acknowledged lines of territory, and their unauthorized introduction of large quantities of British goods within the territorial limits of the United States. Fort Vancouver, the principal depôt of the Hudson Bay Company west of the Rocky mountains, stands on a gentle acclivity, four hundred yards from the shore, on the north bank of the Columbia, or Oregon river, about 100 miles from its mouth. The principal buildings are enclosed by a picket forming an area of 750 by 450 feet. Within the pickets there are thirty-four buildings of all descriptions, including officers' dwelling houses, workshops for carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, coopers, tinners, &c., all of wood, except the magazine for powder, which is of brick. Outside, and very near the fort, there are forty-nine cabins for laborers and mechanics, a large and commodious barn, and seven buildings attached thereto; a hospital and large boat-house on the shore, six miles above the fort. On the north bank the Hudson Bay Company have erected a sawmill on a never-failing stream of water that falls into the Columbia; cuts 2,000 to 2,400 feet of lumber daily; employs twenty-eight men, chiefly Sandwich Islanders, and ten yoke of oxen; depth of water four fathoms at the mill, where the largest ships of the company take in their cargoes for the Sandwich Islands' market.

"The farm at Vancouver contains, at this time, about 3,000 acres of land, fenced and under cultivation, employing, generally, one hundred men, chiefly Canadians and half-breed Iroquois. The mechanics are European. These, with the factors, traders, clerks, and domestics, may be estimated at thirty. The laborers and mechanics live outside the fort in good log cabins; two or three families generally under one roof; and as nearly every man has a wife, or lives with an Indian or half breed woman, and as each family has from two to five slaves, the whole number of persons about Vancouver may be estimated at 750 to 800 souls. The police of the establishment is as strict as in the best regulated military garrison. The men are engaged for the term of five years, at the rate of £17 to £15 per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MAP
of the
UNITED STATES
TERRITORY OF OREGON
West of the Rocky Mountains,
Exhibiting the various Trading Depots or Forts occupied by the British Hudson Bay Company, connected with the Western and northwestern Fur Trade.
Compiled in the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, from the latest authorities, under the direction of Col. J.J. Abert, by
Wash: Hood.
1838.
M.H. Stansbury del.
W.J. Stone Sc. Wash.
The prolongation of the 49th parallel of latitude from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific has been assumed as the Northern Boundary of the U.States possessions on the N.W. coast, in consequence of the following extract from the Hon. H. Clay's letter to Mr. Gallatin dated June 19th 1826. (see Doc. 199. 20th Cong. 1. sess. Ho: of R.) "You are then authorised to propose the annulment of the third article of the Convention of 1818, and the extension of the line on the parallel of 49, from the eastern side of the Stony Mountains, where it now terminates, to the Pacific Ocean as the permanent boundary between the territories of the two powers in that quarter. This is our ultimatum and so you may announce it"
The Posts of the British Hudson's Bay Company are marked thus.
SCALES.
Geographic Miles
Statute Miles
Longitude West from Greenwich
125° 120° 115° 110° 105° 100° 95°
50° 45° 40°
BRITISH TERRITORY
NEW CALEDONIA
LESSER SLAVE LAKE
SASKATCHAWAN
CUMBERLAND
BLOOD
INDIANS
MANDAN DISTRICT
TERRITORY OF OREGON
MEXICO
CALIFORNIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
NEW CORNWALL
NEW HANOVER
NEW GEORGIA
NEW ALBION
Northern Boundary 1818
Southern Boundary 1819
Rocky Mountains
Rocky or Oregon Mts.
Mts. of Anahuac
Black Hills
Ft. Vancouver
Ft. Astoria
Ft. Nasqually
Ft. Nezperces
Ft. Colville
Ft. Okanagan
Ft. Langley
Ft. Umqua
Ft. George
Ft. St. James
Ft. Alexandria
Ft. Assineboins
Ft. Pitt
Ft. Simpson
Lesser Slave Fort
La Cross Ft.
Lac la rouge & Ft.
Carlton Ho.
Edmunton
Cumberland Ho.
Indian Fort
Ellice Ft.
Birdstail Ft.
Quadra & Vancouvers I.
Str. of Juan de Fuca
Columbia R.
Saptin or Lewis or Gt. Snake R.
Missouri River
Yellow Stone R.
Platte R.
Arkansas R.
Youta or Great Salt Lake or Lake Bonneville
Swamp Lakes and Islands. Tide said to rise high in this Swamp Water Fresh.
S. Francisco
Buenaventura R.

annum; but as the exchange is reduced to currency at the rate of five shillings to the dollar, the pound sterling is valued at $4; hence the price of labor is $5 66⅔ to $6 66⅔ per month.

"*Trade, &c.*—A large ship arrives annually from London, and discharges at Vancouver. Cargo, chiefly coarse woollens, cloths, baizes, and blankets; hardware, cutlery, calicoes, cottons, and cotton handkerchiefs; tea, sugar, coffee, and cocoa; tobacco, soap, beads, guns, powder, lead, rum, playing cards, boots, shoes, ready-made clothing, &c.; besides every description of sea stores, canvass, cordage, paints, oils, chains and chain cables, anchors, &c., to refit the company's ships that remain on the coast. These are the ship Nereide, the brig Llama, the schooner Cadborough, and sloop Broughton; the steamboat Beaver, of 150 tons, two engines of thirty-horse power each, built in London last year. These vessels are all well armed and manned; the crews are engaged in England, to serve five years, at £2 per month for seamen. The London ship, with the annual supply, usually arrives in the Columbia in early spring, discharges, and takes a cargo of lumber to the Sandwich Islands; returns in August to receive the furs that are brought to the depôt (Fort Vancouver) once a year from the interior, *via* the Columbia river, from the Snake country, and from the American rendezvous west of the Rocky mountains, and from as far south as St. Francisco, in California. Whilst one of the company's vessels brings in the collections of furs and peltries made at the different depôts along the coast of the north, (see map,) the steamboat is now being employed in navigating those magnificent straits from Juan de Fuca to Stickern. Immense quantities of furs, sea otter, beaver, martin, and sable, can be collected along the shores of these bays and inlets. The chief traders at Narquallah, in 47° 30′, Fort Langley, in 49° 50′, Fort McLaughlin, in 52° 10′, Fort Simpson, in 54° 40′ north, purchase all the furs and peltries from the Indians in the vicinity and as far as New Caledonia, in the interior, and supply them with guns, powder, lead, tobacco, beads, &c.; all of which supplies are taken from the principal depôt at Fort Vancouver.

"An express, as it is called, goes out in March, annually, from Vancouver, and ascends the Columbia 900 miles in batteaus. One of the chief factors, or chief traders, takes charge of the property, and conveys to York factory, on Hudson bay, the annual returns of the business conducted by the Hudson Bay Company west of the Rocky mountains, in the Columbia district. This party, likewise, conveys to the different forts along the route, (see map,) goods suitable to the Indian trade. Other parties take up supplies, as they may be required, to Wallawallah, 250 miles above Vancouver; to Colville, 600 miles above; to the fort, at the junction of Lewis's river, 700 miles above; and to the south, to the Fort McRoys, on the river Umpqua, in latitude 43° 50′ north; and last year, chief-trader McLeod took up to the American rendezvous, in about latitude 43° north, a large supply of British manufactures. This assemblage of American trappers and hunters takes place annually on the western side of the Rocky mountains, generally in the month of July, and amounts to from 450 to 500 men, who bring the result of their year's labor to sell to the American fur-traders. These persons purchase their supplies for the trappers at St. Louis; though, after being subject to the duties on these articles, (chiefly of British manufacture,) they transport their goods about 1,400 miles by land, to sell to citizens of the United States within our acknowledged lines of territory. Last year they met a powerful opponent, in the agent of this foreign

monopoly, chief-trader McLeod, who could well afford to undersell the American fur-trader *on his own ground;* first, by having the advantage of water communication on the Columbia and Lewis's rivers for a distance of 700 to 800 miles; and, secondly, by introducing the goods free of duty, which is equal to at least twenty-five to thirty per centum. But a greater evil than this exists in the influence the Hudson Bay Company exercises over the Indians, by supplying them with arms and ammunition, which may prove, at some future period, highly dangerous to our frontier settlements." * * *

"A council annually assembles at York factory, where reports from the different 'districts' east and west of the Rocky mountains are read and recorded, and their proceedings forwarded to London, to the Hudson Bay house. Chief factors and chief traders hold a seat at this council board, and Governor Simpson presides. It is here that every new enterprise is canvassed, expense and probable profits carefully inquired into, as each member feels a personal interest in every measure adopted. If it is ascertained that in certain 'districts' the quantity of beaver diminishes, the trappers are immediately ordered to desist for a few years, that the animals may increase, as the wealth of the country consists in its furs; and so strict are the laws among many of the northern Indian tribes, that to kill a beaver out of season (*i. e.* in the spring or summer) is a crime punished with death. The enforcement of this law is strongly encouraged by the Hudson Bay Company. Not so careful, however, are the company of the territory not their own; on the contrary, they have established a fort and trading-house called 'McRoy's Fort,' on the river Umpqua, in 43° 50′. This fine stream falls into the Pacific, (but is not laid down in any printed map;) ten thousand beaver skins are collected here, and double this amount brought out of the country adjacent, within our lines; and the Indians are encouraged to '*trap the streams*' at all seasons. From Wallawallah, Lewis's river, and the Snake country, all lying between 42° and 46′ north latitude, 50,000 skins are collected. The price of a beaver skin in the 'Columbia district,' is ten shillings, $2, payable in goods at 50 per cent. on the invoice cost. Each skin averages one and a half pound, and is worth in New York or London $5 per pound; value of $7 50. The beaver skin is the circulating medium of the country." Again, he says: "I beg to call your attention to Pugitt's sound, and urge, in the most earnest manner, that this point shall never be abandoned. If the United States claim, and I hope they ever will, as far north at least as the 49° of latitude, running due west from the Lake of the Woods, on the above parallel, we shall take in Pugitt's sound. In a *military* point of view it is of the highest importance to the United States. If it were in the hands of any foreign power, *especially* Great Britain, with the influence she could command, through the Hudson Bay Company, over the Indians at the north, on those magnificent straits of Juan de Fuca, a force of twenty thousand men could be brought by water in large canoes to the Sound of Pugitt's, in a few days; from thence to Columbia, the distance is but two days' march, via the Cowilety."

Your committee, deeply impressed with the importance of counteracting foreign influence over the Indian tribes within our jurisdiction, will pursue the subject still further.

At first sight it would be reasonable to suppose that the rugged and stern Rocky mountains, whose summits are covered with snow, and ascend *far* beyond the region of perpetual congelation, would constitute an everlasting barrier to the passage of hostile armies between the valley of the Mississippi

and that of the Columbia; for all the journals and narratives of the early explorers of this gloomy region are replete with the sufferings and privations of those who made the passage. The accounts given us by Lewis and Clarke, Andrew Henry, Wilson P. Hunt, Ramsay Crooks, and many others, seemed to have placed this beyond the possibility of a doubt. But of this we shall see. One of its loftiest peaks has been mounted by a traveller after incessant toil. The prospect presenting itself, and the feelings of the beholder, are given in the gorgeous language of Mr. Irving:

"Here a scene burst upon the view of Captain Bonneville that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity. He stood in fact upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world; and on each side of which the landscape declines to the two cardinal oceans of the world. Whichever way he turned his eye he was confused by the vastness and variety of objects. Beneath him the Rocky mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses; deep solemn valleys, treasured lakes, dreary passes, rugged defiles, and foaming torrents; while *beyond* their savage precincts, the eye was lost in an almost immeasurable landscape, stretching on every side into dim and hazy distance, like the expanse of a summer sea. Whichever way he looked he beheld vast plains glimmering with reflected sunshine; mighty streams wandering on their shining course toward either ocean; and snowy mountains, chain *beyond* chain, and peak *beyond* peak, they melted like clouds into the horizon. For a time the Indian fable seemed to be realized. He had obtained that height from which the Black Foot warrior, after death, catches a view of the land of souls, and beholds the happy hunting grounds spread out below him, brightening with the abodes of the free and generous spirits." This line of continuous mountains, when viewed at a distance, everywhere seems impassable: the mind shrinks or recoils from such frowning and forbidding obstacles. But within ten or fifteen years passes of such gentle ascent have been discovered that loaded wagons easily traverse them.

From the valley of the River Platte, General Ashley passed to the opposite valleys of waters that fall into the Great Bear lake.

The waters of this great internal sea are much more brackish than that of the ocean. He descended in canoes one of the rivers that disembogue into it, which was 150 miles in length; and on coasting the lake, he found it 100 miles long, and from 60 to 80 wide. Since then, the passage of the Rocky mountains has become an affair of ordinary occurrence, and even performed by delicate females.

The notice of this is extracted from a journal of Mr. Spalding, who is believed to be a missionary:

"Mr. and Mrs. Spalding, and their associates, Mr. and Mrs. Whitman and Mr. Gray, left the frontiers of Missouri about the first of May, 1836, in company with a gentleman engaged in the fur trade. Their route generally lay near the Missouri river, until they reached the Platte; thence along that river to its fork; thence along the north fork by the Black Hills, to near its source; thence to the Green river, one of the branches of the Western Colorado; thence to the waters of Bear river, which empties itself into the Great Salt lake; and thence to the head waters of Lewis's river, the southern branch of the Columbia river, on which, or on the streams which run into it, they pursued their course to Fort Wallawalla, one of the principal posts of the Hudson Bay Company, about 300 miles from the ocean."

Mrs. Spalding and Mrs. Whitman are believed to be the first white wo-

men who have traversed these mountains. Thus has vanished the great obstacle to a direct and facile communication between Mississippi valley and the Pacific ocean.

But your committee will not disguise their fears that, if the United States permits this territory to fall into the hands of England, she would, in time of war, be enabled from that quarter to send against this country an immense power. With a well-appointed force mounted on the fleet steeds of the valley of the Columbia, that force, with the necessary munitions of war and provisions, could ascend the southern branches of the Columbia river to where they almost interlock with the Platte and other streams which fall into the Missouri river; and after surmounting the slight difficulties which have been shown to exist, they would soon make their way to the great plains of the west. Over these boundless prairies roam numerous Indian tribes, who wander regularly from north to south, and from south to north, hanging on the flanks and rear of the countless herds of buffaloe that perform their periodical migrations over this great American desert.

"Some portion of the wilderness along the rivers may partially be subdued by agriculture; others may form vast pastoral tracts, like those of the east; but it is to be feared that a great part of it will form a lawless *interval* between the abodes of civilized man, like the waters of the ocean or the deserts of Arabia, and like them be subject to the depredations of the marauder. Here may spring up new and mongrel races, like new formations in geology; the amalgamation of the 'debris' and 'abrasions' of former races, civilized and savage; the remains of broken and almost extinguished tribes; the descendants of wandering hunters and trappers; of fugitives from the Spanish and American frontiers; of adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country, yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness. We are contributing, incessantly, to swell this singular and heterogeneous cloud of wild population that is to hang about our frontier, by the transfer of whole tribes of savages from the east of the Mississippi to the great wastes of the far west; many of these bear the smart of real or fancied injuries; many consider themselves as expatriated beings, wrongfully exiled from their hereditary homes, and the sepulchres of their fathers, and cherish a *deep* and *abiding* animosity against the race that has dispossessed them. Some may gradually become pastoral hordes, like those rude and migratory people, half shepherd, half warrior, who, with their flocks and herds, roam the plains of upper Asia; but others, it is to be apprehended, will become predatory bands, mounted on the fleet steeds of the prairies, with the open plains for their marauding ground, and the mountains for their retreats and lurking places."* Such is a faithful picture of the nature and character of these savage and miscellaneous hordes who roam the plains or inhabit the borders of this SAHARA; and who, through the influence of money, presents artfully distributed, combined with some show of military force, could be collected, if necessary, into one formidable array, and precipitated along the whole line of the western frontier, overwhelming it with death and destruction.

Will Great Britain fail to secure, by every appliance, the friendship, trade, and aid, in a war with us, of the numerous and fierce tribes scattered along our extended frontiers? Her conduct during the war of the revolution, when she employed them against us; her conduct in exciting them to constant acts of hostility during the period *she* held possession, in defiance of a solemn treaty, of the northwest posts; the massacre of St.

* Astoria.

Clair's army; of the river Raisin; of Dudley's corps; and a host of like melancholy instances, will furnish an answer. And, in continuance of this uniform policy, she is *now* dispensing fire-arms and presents from the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Columbia river. Even the Indians of the deep glens and valleys of the Rocky mountains are influenced by this pervading policy.

It has been shown with what facility the Rocky mountains can be traversed. It will now be shown how easy it is to reach them from the west. Colonel Dodge left Leavenworth on the 29th of May, 1835, with three companies of the 2d regiment of dragoons. He took with the command two pieces of artillery, two wagon loads of flour, and twenty-five head of beef cattle, to furnish food, should the chase fail. Ascending the left bank of the Missouri, to the river Platte, which they traversed, they then followed the left of the Platte to its south fork, which they pursued, when, for the first time, on the 15th of June, after the clouds had passed away that lowered over the earth, was unveiled to their view a magnificent prospect of the Rocky mountains peering above the horizon. These mountains resembled white conical clouds lying along the verge of the earth. The rays of a gorgeous setting sun shone upon their snow-capt summits, now at the distance of one hundred miles, giving them a beautiful and splendid appearance. They continued to approach these grand land-marks, when, on the 24th, the Platte was seen emerging from the third and loftiest tier of mountains, pouring its enormous mass of waters over a precipice several hundred feet high, furnishing one of the most sublime spectacles in nature. After spending a month in this elevated and delightful region, and forming treaties of peace with several tribes of Indians, they passed the dividing ridge which separates the Platte from the Arkansas. They then descended the last named river to the main road, leading from the State of Missouri to Santa Fe, and the internal provinces of Mexico.

After a march of 1,600 miles, the corps arrived at Fort Leavenworth on the 16th of September, in good health, having lost but one man on the route. One of the beef cattle was brought back in a better condition than when it started on the journey.

Colonel Dodge is decidedly of the opinion that an army could march with ease from our western confines to the Pacific ocean, taking with it all its artillery, munitions of war, and provisions.

A vast chain of mountains commences at the southern extremity of the American continent, which range along the borders of the Pacific ocean, and after *threading* the Isthmus of Darien, pass, with various altitudes, through Guatamala, Mexico, and its provinces, California, Territory of Oregon, and finally disappear in the Arctic region. The northern portion is called the Rocky or Stony mountains, which rise in abrupt ruggedness on the side of the great North American plains, and apparently formed, at a remote period in the history of the world, on its eastern face, the walls to a vast internal sea, the bed of which was the valley of the Mississippi; whilst from its western flanks the descent is in regular terraces to the ocean. The northern extremity of this great spine of the world, gives origin to some of the noblest rivers of the globe, the Missouri, Saskatchawine, Peace, Columbia, &c.

The following extract from the Encyclopedia of Geography, it is understood, presents much the most correct and scientific account of these mountains yet given to the world, and will not, perhaps, prove uninteresting here:

"The Rocky mountains consist, as far as they have been examined, of primary formations, and their eastern chain, the Black hills, of gneiss and mica slate, green stone, amygdaloid, and other igneous rocks. Chains of primary mountains, separated by sandy plains and volcanic tracts, constitute the country between the Rocky mountains and the Pacific; but to the east of that range are several nearly horizontal formations, of the limits or the relative age of which little is known.

"The country, from the falls of the Platte to the mountains, and from the Missouri to the Arkansas and the Rio Colorado, as well as the plains included within the Rocky mountains, is composed of a red saliferous sandstone, containing beds of clay; and it is supposed that the same formation extends into Mexico, and that the red sand-stone described by Humboldt as occurring extensively in the southern parts of the continent, may belong to it. The general color of the sandstone is red, but it is sometimes grey or white. The saline contents are principally muriate of soda, but other salts, of bitter and cathartic properties, likewise abound. Brine springs are of general occurrence, and rock salt is found in large beds west of the Rocky mountains, as well as on the Rio Colorado, and south of the great Salt Lake. The surface of the ground, especially of the banks of the ravines, is often, also, thickly incrusted with saline matter. Gypsum is likewise found in many parts of the country, and fossils are said to abound in the sandstone on the river Platte. In the neighborhood of the Rocky mountains, the formation is covered with a deposite of gravel and boulders, apparently derived from the adjacent hills; but at a distance from them it is overlaid by a bed of loose barren sand, the drifting of which, the author conceives, may partially conceal the existence of other formations, especially of that green sand which occurs so extensively on the Missouri above the river Platte.

"At the eastern base of the Rocky mountains, and for a short distance up their declivity, are various conglomerates, and grey and red sandstones, dipping at high angles; but these deposites are not considered to belong to the great sandstone formation, as they contain no salt.

"In ascending the Missouri from its confluence with the Mississippi, the banks are, in many cases, composed of limestone cliffs, 200 and 300 feet high, containing productæ, terebratulæ, and encrini: hills of this limestone occur also near the Chariton, and in the same district is good bituminous coal.

"Above the junction of the Platte with the Missouri are beds of sandstone and dark blue shale, and a little higher, adjacent to the Au Jacque, are high perpendicular bluffs, of a formation considered to be true chalk. This deposite extends for several miles up the Missouri, and it occurs further down the river, about the mouth of the Omawhaw, but its lateral extent is not known. No flints have yet been noticed *in situ*, but pebbles and nodules of flints, similar to those so abundant in the valley of the Thames, are numerous lower down the river, even as low as the Mississippi. Belemnites have been picked up in the same district.

"From below the Big Bend to the Rocky mountains, both on the Missouri and the Yellow-stone river, is a vast formation, said to be very rich in fossils, indicating an upper secondary group, and the matrix in which the shells are imbedded resembles, very closely, some of the green sand beds of Europe. The fossils mentioned in the paper are a Hamite, a Gryphæa, considered to be the *Gryphæa Columba*, and *Belemnites compressus*. This formation has not been traced continuously over the whole area alluded

to, but the same fossils have been brought from the beds of the Missouri and Yellow Stone rivers, and from their springs in the Rocky mountains; they have likewise been found west of that range.

"Above the Big Bend occurs, also, an extensive range of horizontal beds of lignite, sandstone, shale, and clay, forming bluffs 200 and 300 feet high, and continuous for several days' journey. Lignite is also found on the Cherry river, and along the whole of the country watered by the Powder river, in beds from 3 to 9 feet thick. This formation is conceived to be more recent than that which contains the fossils, as the latter has a slight westerly dip, and therefore may underlie it.

"Silicified trunks of trees are stated to have been noticed on the banks of the streams, and are considered by the traders to have fallen from the bluffs.

"No recent volcanic production appears to have yet been brought from the country east of the Rocky mountains, with the exception of the pumice which annually descends the Missouri; but nothing is yet known of the quarter whence it is derived. West of the mountains, however, from the Salmon river to beyond Louis's river, and for a considerable distance around the insulated mountains called the Butts, the country is said to be composed of lava, traversed by a multitude of deep, extensive fissures, having a general direction from northwest to southeast, and nearly parallel to that of the mountains.

"Volcanic mounds, cracked at the top and surrounded by fissures, are numerous over the whole region, but no lava appears to have flown from them, and we may conjecture that they were formed by the action of elastic or gaseous matter. In many places, deep circular funnels, a few yards in diameter, penetrate the surface. For more than 40 miles the Columbia runs between perpendicular cliffs of lava and obsidian, from 200 to 300 feet high, which are traversed by great fissures, and present all the phenomena of dikes in the most striking manner. The Malador branch of the Columbia flows through a similar gorge.

"We take this occasion to correct the accounts previously given of the Great Salt Lake, which has lately been journeyed round, and ascertained to have no outlet, though it receives two considerable streams of fresh water. The length of the lake is estimated to be 150 miles, and its breadth 40 or 50.

"Thermal springs abound along the base on each side of the Rocky mountains, and in the volcanic district. They are stated to vary in temperature from blood-heat to the boiling point; and to form, from their earthy contents, large mounds, sometimes of a pure white, hard, siliceous nature, and, at others, of a substance which, on drying, becomes pulverulent. In the volcanic district some of the springs are said to be sour; and many sulphurous springs occur both in and west of the mountains. Lastly, pure sulphur has been occasionally seen above the Great Salt Lake, and at the eastern base of the mountains, but none in the volcanic district."

Navigators, early as well as recent, portray the country in glowing language, and dwell with delight on the lovely variety of hill and dale, fertility of soil, noble forests, amenity of landscape, pure limpid streams flowing through the land; but, above all, they dwell, with the greatest satisfaction, on the soft climate of this delightful coast. Cook, Dixon, Portlock, Vancouver, Langsdorf, Kotzebue, and many others, unite in the same opinion as to the benignity of the climate, which varies wide from that on the opposite coast of the Atlantic ocean, where, in the winter and spring seasons, in the

same parallels of latitude, storm, and tempest, hail, snow, and sleet hold sullen sway.

When Lewis and Clarke took their departure from the coast of the Pacific ocean in the month of March, the surface of the earth was dressed in flowers; the embryo buds had expanded into leaves, whilst the grass in the river bottoms was 12 or 18 inches high.

The following statement of the weather, during the winter and spring they spent there, will not, perhaps, prove uninteresting to the Senate. The temperature changed as they approached the mountains, the highest peaks of which were covered with everlasting snows.

January 7. The loss of the thermometer sincerely regretted. The parties confident that the climate is much warmer than in the same parallel of latitude in the Atlantic ocean. There has been one slight white frost since the 7th of November. We have seen no ice, and the weather is so warm that we are obliged to cure our meat with smoke and fire to save it.

January 12. The wind from any quarter off the land, or along the northwest coast, causes the air to become cooler.

January 14. Weather perfectly temperate; never experienced so warm a winter as the present.

January 25. It is now perceptibly colder than it has been this winter.

January 28. Pretty keen frost; the coldest night of the season.

February. Fair 6, rain 16, cloudy 5, snow 1 day.

February 8. The feeling of the air indicated that rigor of the winter had passed.

February 24. Quite warm.

March. Fair 8, rain 16, cloudy 7. So warm that fire was unnecessary.

March 13. Plants began to appear above the ground.

March 15. Plants put forth their leaves.

March 25. Gooseberry bushes in leaf.

March 26. Humming birds appear.

March 30. Grass sixteen inches high in river bottoms.

Mr. Prevost says that "the climate to the southward of 53° assumes a mildness unknown in the same latitude on the eastern side of the continent. Without digressing to speculate upon the cause, I will merely state that such is particularly the fact in 46° 16', the site of Fort Gregory. The mercury, during the winter, seldom descends below the freezing point; when it does so, it is rarely stationary for any number of days, and the severity of the season is more determined by the quantity of water than by its congelation. The rains usually commence with November, and continue to fall partially until the latter end of March or the beginning of April. A benign spring succeeds, and when the summer heats obtain, they are so tempered with showers as seldom to suspend vegetation. I found it luxuriant on my arrival, (October 1, 1818,) and during a fortnight's stay, experienced no change of weather to retard its course."

Mr. Irving, in his Astoria, says: "A remarkable characteristic of the country west of the Rocky mountains, is the mildness and equability of the climate. That great mountain barrier seems to divide the continent into different climates even in the same degree of latitude. The rigorous winters and sultry summers, and all the capricious inequalities of temperature prevalent on the Atlantic side of the mountains, are but little felt on their western declivities. The country between them and the Pacific is

blessed with *milder* and *steadier* temperature, resembling the climate of parallel latitudes in Europe. In the plains and valleys, but little snow falls throughout the winter, and usually melts while falling. It rarely lies on the ground more than two days at a time, except on the summit of the mountains. The winters are rainy rather than cold. The rains for four months, from the middle of October to the middle of March, are almost incessant, and often accompanied by tremendous thunder and lightning. The winds prevalent at this season are from the south and southeast, which usually bring rain. Those from the north to the southwest are the harbingers of fair weather and a clear sky. The residue of the year, from the middle of March to the middle of October, an interval of seven months, is SERENE and delightful. There is scarcely any rain throughout this time, yet the face of the country is kept fresh and verdant by nightly dews, and, occasionally, by humid fogs in the mornings. These are not considered prejudicial to health, since both the natives and the whites sleep in the open air with perfect impunity. While this equable and bland temperature prevails throughout the lower country, the peaks and ridges of the vast mountains by which it is DOMINATED, are covered with perpetual snow. This renders them discernable at a great distance, shining, at times, like bright summer clouds; at other times, assuming the most aerial tints, and always forming brilliant and striking features in the vast landscape. The mild temperature prevalent throughout the country is attributed, by some, to the succession of winds from the Pacific ocean, extending from latitude 20° to at least 50° north. These temper the heat of summer, so in the shade no one is incommoded by perspiration. They also soften the rigors of winter, and produce such a moderation in climate that the inhabitants can wear the same dress throughout the year."

The following extract is from a recently published journal of Mr. Spalding, who lately passed from the valley of the Mississippi to the mouth of the Columbia, with his wife:

"We left Wallawalla the 6th of September, in a boat propelled by six oarsmen. The usual time of a passage down is five days. We were detained by head winds, and did not arrive till the 12th. Here we were met by the warmest expressions of friendship by Doctor McLaughlin, who conducted us immediately to his house. After a brief interview, he conducted us to his gardens, and, be assured, we were not a little surprised to see west of the Rocky mountains, where we expected to meet scarcely the first buddings of civilization, such perfection in horticulture. About five acres are laid out in order, and stored with almost every species of vegetables, fruits, and flowers; and among them figs and citrons, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, cotton plants, and all common fruits in the United States. Every thing produces well. For some days our time was divided between visits on the farm, to the mills, the herds, the dairy, the stores, the ships in port, the school, &c. It of course gave us great satisfaction to witness these fruits of civilization, which we supposed our eyes had looked upon for the last time when we passed the frontier line of our own land. Dr. McLaughlin's farm is the largest on the Columbia river, and produced last year 4,500 bushels of wheat, 4,000 of peas, 1,700 of barley, 1,500 of oats, potatoes not gathered, corn but little. His horned cattle 750, swine 400, with from 200 to 300 horses. He has a saw mill and a flouring mill."

Such, from a united stream of testimony, is the softness of this climate that it may almost be considered tropical. The country from the ocean ascends by regular terraces or plateaus, to the summits of the Rocky mountains, and presents every variety of soil, which will be found adapted to every variety of culture, and is watered by the noble Columbia and its numerous tributaries; and, at some not far distant day, will be found the theatre of man's grandest and happiest efforts.

Lewis and Clarke, in describing the *immediate* valley of the Columbia river, say: "This valley is bounded westward by the mountainous country bordering the coast, from which it extends eastward thirty miles in a direct line, till it is closed by the range of mountains crossing the Columbia above the Great Falls. Its length from north to south we are unable to determine, but we believe that the valley must extend to a great distance; it is, in fact, the only desirable situation for a settlement on the western side of the Rocky mountains, and, being naturally fertile, would, if properly cultivated, afford subsistence for forty or fifty thousand souls. The highlands are generally of a dark, rich loam, not much injured by stones, and though waving, by no means too steep for cultivation, and a few miles from the river they widen, at least on the north side, into rich, extensive prairies. The timber on them is abundant, and consists almost exclusively of the several species of fir already described, and some of which grow to a great height. We measured a fallen tree of that species, and found that, including a stump of about six feet, it was three hundred and eighteen feet in length, though its diameter was only three feet. The dog-wood is also abundant on the uplands; it differs from that of the United States, in having a much smoother bark, and in being much larger; the trunk attaining a diameter of nearly two feet. There is some white cedar, of a large size, but no pine of any kind. In the bottom lands are the cotton-wood, ash, large leafed ash, and sweet willow. Interspersed with these are the pashequaw, shanataque, and compound fern, of which the natives use the roots. The red flowring currant abounds on the upland, while along the river bottoms grow luxuriantly the water-cress, strawberry, cinquefoil, narrow-dock, sandrush, and the flowring pea, which is not yet in bloom. There is, also, a species of the bear's-claw, now blooming, but the large-leafed thorn has disappeared, nor do we see any longer the huckleberry, the shallum, or any of the other evergreen shrubs which bear berries, except the species, the leaf of which has a prickly margin."

The same gentlemen also observe: "The horse is confined principally to the nations inhabiting the Great Plains of Columbia, extending from latitude 40° to 50° north, and occupying the tract of territory lying between the Rocky mountains, and a range of mountains which pass the Columbia river about the Great Falls. Free tribes possess them in immense numbers. They appear to be of an excellent race, lofty, elegantly formed, active, and durable. Many of them appear like fine English coursers, and resemble in fleetness and bottom the best blooded horses of Virginia. The natives suffer them to run at large in the plains, the grass of which affords them their only winter subsistence, their masters taking no trouble to lay in a winter store for them; notwithstanding, they will, unless much exercised, fatten on the dry grass afforded by the plains during the winter. Whether the horse was originally a native of this country or not, the soil and the climate appear to be perfectly well adapted to the nature of this animal. Horses are said to be found wild in many parts of this extensive

country. An elegant horse may be purchased of the natives for a few beads or other paltry trinkets, which, in the United States, would not cost more than one or two dollars. The abundance and cheapness of horses will be extremely advantageous to those who may hereafter attempt the fur trade to the East Indies, by way of Columbia river, and the Pacific ocean."

Wild sheep are also found in this region, and on the coast: Lewis and Clarke say, "The sheep is found in many places, but mostly in the timbered parts of the Rocky mountains. They live in greater numbers on the chain of mountains forming the commencement of the woody country on the coast. We have seen only the skins of these animals, which the natives dress with the wool, and the blankets which they manufacture from the wool. The animal, from this evidence, appears to be of the size of our common sheep, of a white color. The wool is fine on many parts of the body, but, in length, not equal to that of our domestic sheep."

Since the expedition of these gentlemen, several districts have been discovered, of boundless fertility, along the coast, as well as inland, and it can now be said, without fear of contradiction, that it will prove the finest grazing country in the world; greatly superior, in every respect, to Mexico or to the plains and pampas of South America.

In conclusion, the committee would remark, that the title of the United States to the Territory of Oregon is, in their opinion, beyond doubt; that its possession is important in our commercial and Indian relations; that it is in danger of being lost by delay; and so viewing it, they hope the Executive will take steps to bring the controversy on this subject with England to a speedy termination. In the mean time they have reported a bill authorizing the President to employ in that quarter such portions of the army and navy of the United States as he may deem necessary for the protection of the persons and property of those who may reside in that country.

The map of the Territory of Oregon, and chart of the Columbia river, which accompany this report, are believed to be the most correct, and furnish the most recent and authentic information, of any yet published, and were prepared by Colonel Abert, of the Topographical bureau, with much care and labor. The chart was made by Mr. Slacum, after his recent visit to Oregon.

On the discovery and first occupation of Columbia river.

I, Charles Bulfinch, of Boston, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, of lawful age, testify and declare that, in the year 1787, Joseph Barrell, Esq., a distinguished merchant of Boston, projected a voyage of commerce and discovery to the northwest coast of America, and associated with him for that purpose the following named persons, and in the following proportions, to wit: Samuel Brown, one-seventh part; John Derby, one seventh; Crowell Hatch, one seventh; John M. Pintard, one-seventh; and the deponent, one-seventh, reserving to himself two sevenths of the concern. That, for the purpose of this voyage, the ship Columbia, under the command of John Kendrick, and the sloop Washington, commanded by Robert Gray, were equipped, provided with suitable cargoes for traffic with the natives of the northwest coast. That so remarkable was the expedition considered, it being the first attempt from the United States to circumnavigate the globe, that medals were struck, both in silver and copper, bearing on one side the

representation of the two vessels, and on the other the names of the owners. Very particular sailing orders were agreed to, and signed by Mr. Barrell, as agent for the owners, and by the captains, officers, and seamen of both vessels, in which the course of the voyage and the traffic with the natives were pointed out; and it was specially provided that all transactions of business should be on the sole account of the owners. Mr. J. Howell, a very intelligent Englishman, went as clerk to Captain Kendrick. These vessels left Boston in the autumn of 1787. After long delay, they reached Nootka sound, and proceeded to traffic with the natives for furs; and when a sufficient quantity had been collected, Captain Kendrick put Captain Gray in command of the ship Columbia, to proceed with the cargo of furs for Canton, while he remained on the coast, with the sloop Washington, to make further collections of furs. Captain Gray proceeded to Canton, made sale of his furs, and purchased a cargo of teas, with which he returned to Boston. The result of the voyage disappointed the expectations of its projectors, the proceeds of the teas not being equal to the cost of outfit and the unforeseen expenses in Canton and elsewhere; so that Messrs. Derby and Pintard would not pursue the enterprise further, but sold their shares in the vessels to Messrs. Barrell and Brown. They, with the other owners, determined to send Captain Gray, in command of the Columbia, to the coast for the furs which, it was supposed, Captain Kendrick had been collecting. In this ship, Mr. John Hoskins, a young man who had been in Mr. Barrell's counting room, and who was in his confidence, was sent as captain's clerk, with the design of attending to sales and purchases. Captain Gray proceeded to the northwest coast, and on the 7th of May, 1792, came in sight of land, in latitude 46° 58', and anchored in, what he named, Bulfinch's harbor. On the 11th, he entered the mouth of a large river, and on the 14th, sailed up the same about fifteen miles. This river he named *Columbia*, after the name of his ship; the north side of the entrance, *Cape Hancock*, and the south side, *Point Adams*. Captain Gray remained in this river until the morning of the 21st May. The knowledge of these facts was obtained as follows: After Captain Gray had made a second voyage to Canton, he returned to Boston with a cargo of teas. It was determined by the owners to prosecute the voyage no further with the ship, but to leave Captain Kendrick, in the sloop Washington, to attend to their interests on the coast. Intelligence was obtained from Captain Gray of the discovery of Columbia river; but nothing was done in consequence of it until 1816, when Samuel Brown, Esq., the principal living owner, after the death of Joseph Barrell, Esq., requested the deponent to make inquiry after Captain Gray's papers, and to take correct copies of all proceedings relative thereto; and this was done in consequence of President Madison's application to him for information. The deponent accordingly applied to the friends of the widow of Captain Gray; and, after some time spent in the search, obtained from Mr. Silas Atkins, a brother of the widow Gray, the original log-book of the ship Columbia, while under the command of Captain Gray, from which he made the following extract:

From the Log-Book of the ship Columbia, Robert Gray, master, 1792.

May 7, 1792, A. M.—Being within six miles of the land, saw an entrance in the same, which had a very good appearance of a harbor; lowered away the jolly boat, and went in search of an anchoring place, the ship

standing to and fro, with a very strong weather current. At 1 P. M., the boat returned, having found no place where the ship could anchor with safety; made sail on the ship—stood in for the shore. We soon saw, from our mast head, a passage in between the sand bars. At half past 3, bore away, and run in northeast by east, having from four to eight fathoms, sandy bottom; and, as we drew in nearer between the bars, had from ten to thirteen fathoms, having a very strong tide of ebb to stem. Many canoes came alongside. At 5 P.M., came to in five fathoms water, sandy bottom, in a safe harbor, well sheltered from the sea by long sand bars and spits. Our latitude observed, this day, was 46° 58′ north.

May 10.—Fresh breezes, and pleasant weather; many natives along side; at noon, all the canoes left us. At 1 P. M., began to unmoor, took up the best bower anchor, and hove short on the small bower anchor. At half past 4, being high water, hove up the anchor, and came to sail and a beating down the harbor.

May 11.—At half-past 7, we were out clear of the bars, and directed our course to the southward, along shore. At 8 P. M., the entrance of Bulfinch's harbor bore north, distance four miles, the southern extremity of the land bore south-southeast half east, and the northern north-northwest—sent up the maintop gallant-yard and set all sail. At 4 A. M., saw the entrance of our desired port bearing east-southeast, distance six leagues; in steering sails, and hauled our wind in shore. At 8 A. M., being a little to windward of the entrance of the harbor, bore away, and run in east-northeast, between the breakers, having from five to seven fathoms of water. When we were over the bar, we found this to be a large river of fresh water, up which we steered. Many canoes came along side. At 1 P. M., came to with the small bower, in ten fathoms, black and white sand; the entrance between the bars bore west-southwest, distant ten miles. The north side of the river, a half mile distant from the ship; the south side of the same two and a half miles distance; a village on the north side of the river west by north, distant three quarters of a mile. Vast numbers of natives came along side—people employed in pumping the salt water out of our water casks, in order to fill with fresh, while the ship floated in. So ends.

May 12.—Many natives along side; noon, fresh wind; let go the best bower anchor and veered out on both cables. Sent down the maintop-gallant-yard, filled up all the water casks in the hold. The latter part, heavy gales, and rainy, dirty weather.

May 13.—Fresh winds, and rainy weather, many natives along side. Hove up the best bower anchor. Seamen and tradesmen at their various departments.

May 14.—Fresh gales and cloudy; many natives along side; at noon, weighed and came to sail, standing up the river northeast by east; we found the channel very narrow. At 4 P. M., we had sailed upwards of twelve or fifteen miles, when the channel was so very narrow that it was almost impossible to keep in it, having from three to eighteen fathoms water, sandy bottom; at half past four, the ship took ground: but she did not stay long before she came off, without any assistance. We backed her off, stern foremost, into three fathoms, and let go the small bower, and moored ship with kedge and hawser. The jolly boat was sent to sound the channel out, but found it not navigable any further up; so, of course, we must have taken the wrong channel. So ends, with rainy weather, many natives along side.

Tuesday, May 15.—Light airs and pleasant weather; many natives from different tribes came along side. At 10 A. M., unmoored and dropped down with the tide to a better anchoring place. Smiths and other tradesmen constantly employed. In the afternoon, Captain Gray and Mr. Hoskins, in the jolly boat, went on shore to take a short view of the country.

May 16.—Light airs and cloudy; at 4 A. M., hove up the anchor and towed down about three miles, with the last of the ebb tide; came into six fathoms, sandy bottom, the jolly boat sounding the channel. At 10 A. M., a fresh breeze came up river. With the first of the ebb tide we got under way and beat down river. At 1, from its being very squally, we came to, about two miles from the village, *Chinouk*, which bore west-southwest. Many natives alongside; fresh gales and squally.

May 17.—Fresh winds and squally; many canoes alongside. Caulkers caulking the pinnace; seamen paying the ship's sides with tar; painter painting ship; smiths and carpenters at their departments.

May 18.—Pleasant weather; at 4 in the morning began to heave ahead; at ½ past came to sail, standing down river with the ebb tide; at 7, being slack water and the wind fluttering, we came to in 5 fathoms, sandy bottom; the entrance between the bars bore southwest by west, distance three miles. The north point of the harbor bore northwest, distant two miles; the south bore southeast, distant three and a half miles. At 9, a breeze sprang up from the eastward; took up the anchor and came to sail, but the wind soon came fluttering again. Came to with the kedge and hawser, veered out fifty fathoms. Noon pleasant. Latitude observed 46° 17′ north. At 1, came to sail with the first of the ebb tide, and drifted down broadside, with light airs and strong tide; at three-quarters past, a fresh wind came from the northward; wore ship and stood into the river again. At 4 came to in six fathoms; good holding ground, about six or seven miles up; many canoes along side.

May 19.—Fresh wind and clear weather. Early a number of canoes came alongside; seamen and tradesmen employed in their various departments.

Captain Gray gave this river the name of *Columbia's* river, and the north side of the entrance *Cape Hancock;* the south, *Adams's point.*

May 20.—Gentle breezes and pleasant weather. At 1 P. M., being full sea, took up the anchor and made sail, standing down river. At 2, the wind left us, we being on the bar with a very strong tide, which set on the breakers; it was now not possible to get out without a breeze to shoot her across the tide; so we were obliged to bring up in 3½ fathoms, the tide running 5 knots. At three-quarters past 2, a fresh wind came in from seaboard; we immediately came to sail and beat over the bar, having from 5 to 7 fathoms water in the channel. At 5 P. M., we were out, clear of all the bars, and in 20 fathoms water. A breeze came from the southward; we bore away to the northward; set all sail to the best advantage. At 8, Cape *Hancock* bore southeast, distant three leagues; the north extremity of the land in sight bore north by west. At 9, in steering and top gallant sails. Midnight, light airs.

May 21.—At 6 A. M., the nearest land in sight bore east-southeast, distant eight leagues. At 7, set top gallant sails and light stay sails. At 11, set steering sails fore and aft. Noon, pleasant agreeable weather. The entrance of *Bulfinch's* harbor bore southeast by east half east, distant five leagues.

The deponent hereby certifies that the above extract contains every thing relating to the discovery of *Columbia* river, which was contained in the log book kept by Captain Gray, on board the ship *Columbia*.

And the deponent further certifies, that in the month of September, in the past year, 1837, he was applied to by ——— Slacum, Esq., of Alexandria, in the District of Columbia, for any information which he might possess on this subject; that he exhibited to Mr. Slacum such papers and documents relating to the subject as were in his possession, and referred him to the widow of Captain Gray, or to her descendants, for the original log-book before mentioned; that in consequence of this, Mr. Slacum employed Thomas Bulfinch, a son of the deponent, to make inquiry and search for said original log-book; that said Thomas Bulfinch accordingly made such inquiry, and found that Capt. Silas Atkins and Mrs. Gray, widow of Captain Robert Gray, had both departed this life several years since; that there were no surviving immediate descendants of Captain Gray, but that Mrs. Nash, a niece of Mrs. Gray, was probably possessed of all the papers that related to his command of the Columbia. Thomas Bulfinch then applied to Mrs. Nash, who very readily handed to him one log-book of the ship Columbia, containing minutes of her voyage from Boston to the straights of John de Fuca, in 1791, but stated that another log-book, which contained the proceedings at Columbia river in 1792, had been used as waste paper, and was entirely destroyed. Upon hearing this, the deponent determined to draw up a statement, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, of all the evidence now to be obtained of the discovery of said *Columbia* river, he being the only survivor of the original undertakers of the enterprise, and having outlived, at the age of 75, all who, as officers or seamen, were engaged in the operations of the Columbia and Washington; which statement may, in future, be important in determining the right of the United States to the honor of discovering the river, and, consequently, to the right of jurisdiction over the country adjacent.

CHARLES BULFINCH.

UNITED STATES,
Massachusetts District.

Then Charles Bulfinch, Esq., of the city of Boston, personally appeared and made oath to the truth of the within declaration, (by him written and subscribed,) so far as relates to particulars stated as within his own knowledge, and in regard to all other facts and circumstances therein expressed, that he believes the same to be true.

Before me,

JOHN DAVIS,
Judge of U. S. District Court, Mass. District.

BOSTON, *April* 21, 1838.